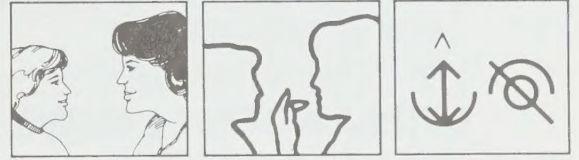


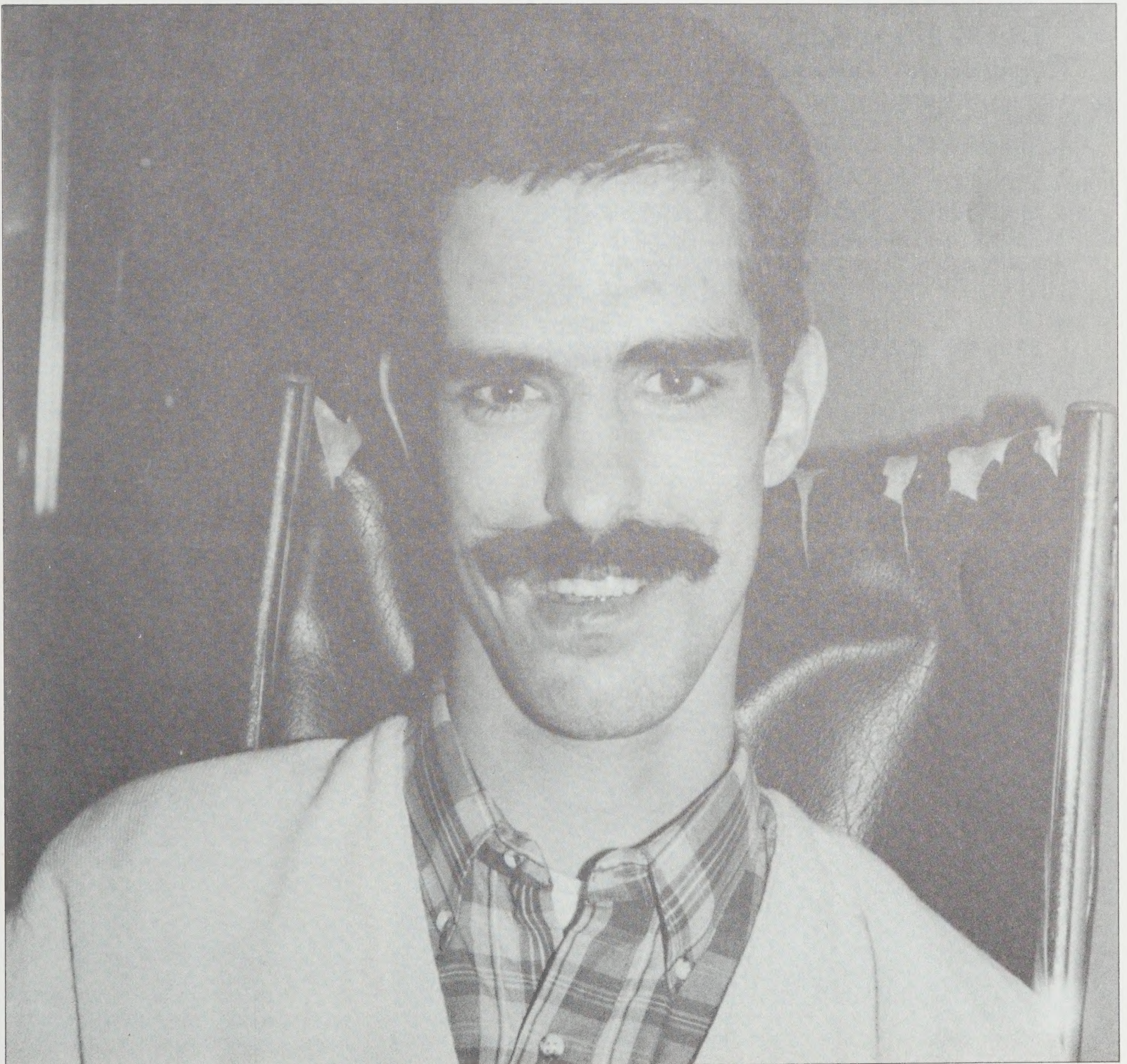
COMMUNICATING TOGETHER



A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE ABOUT AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 1

MARCH 1988



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WRITING: A PROFESSIONAL AND A PERSONAL VIEW

WILLIAM L. RUSH

William Rush, who has cerebral palsy, is a professional writer and strong advocate for the disabled. Recently he visited the Easter Seal Communication Institute and spoke to a group of young adult augmentative communicators about his experiences in independent living and his career as a writer. He is the author of "Journey out of Silence", an autobiography. He is currently a freelance journalist and the associate editor of an advocacy newsletter.

Necessity, not a conscious choice, fathered my decision to become a writer. I was born with cerebral palsy thirty-two years ago. As a result, I can't talk, walk, or reliably use my hands. I talk and write with a copper stylus attached to my head via a band. In 1983, I received my bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Nebraska. I have written several articles for newspapers and magazines and one book. Therefore, I'm regarded as a professional writer.

Since I was a toddler who didn't toddle, my family and I realized that a career as an all-American quarterback was out for me. But when the headstick and typewriter entered my life, a writing career became a possibility because I did all my talking through the written word.

I began to develop as a writer when I started composing letters to my friends. This taught me that writing was just communicating with one person rather than a massive audience. So, I developed the habit of thinking I was writing to just one person. Writing letters also taught me that this form of communication had to be clear because I couldn't be there when a person read my letter to clarify what I meant.

Criticism is Necessary

Formal education and informal coaching taught me to accept criticism — even to want it —

because it's only through making mistakes (then acknowledging and correcting them) that we grow. They also taught me to edit my writing, and taught me to be objective about it — to separate myself from my writing.

Learning to separate myself from my writing was essential. This was because editors and publishers have rejected me more often than I would have liked. If I had taken each rejection as a personal insult, I wouldn't have lasted as a writer. Experience has taught me that if editors reject my work, they are not saying I'm a bad person. They are saying they can't use my stories.

For example, suppose I wrote a story on bass fishing in Canada and sent it to a computer magazine. Unless the story dealt with how computers were helping fishermen catch bass, the computer magazine would not buy it because the story didn't meet its needs. The editors of the computer magazine aren't saying that I'm evil. They are just saying that bass fishing in Canada isn't a topic for their publication and that I need a lesson in marketing my stories.

When I'm rejected by a magazine, I send my story off to another magazine immediately. For example, if

the computer magazine sent back the bass fishing story, I, then, ought to try an outdoors magazine, which should have been my first choice. Maybe that magazine will reject it also. But, if I leave my story in my bottom desk drawer, a magazine will never publish it.

I write primarily to get published, to get a steady source of income. I would go broke if I tried digging ditches for a living, and a less material and more altruistic side of me wants to contribute something of value to the rest of society.

In most of my stories, I try to advocate for people with disabilities. I hope that through my writing I will be able to let our brothers and sisters with agile bodies know that people with disabilities have the same needs, dreams, and desires as they do. I strongly hope that my writing will allow others to see beyond our physical differences to discover we are the same as they are.

However, through the years I have found that writing has other advantages. One benefit is that it helps me to be more objective about a problem. This is because for me writing is talking. So by writing about a problem I'm talking it out.



Bill Rush and ESCI consultant Katy Mann share a joke at his presentation at the Easter Seal Communication Institute, Toronto.

Also, by writing about it I'm forced to look at the problem with the same detached objectivity as I view my writing. By looking at a problem objectively I'm able to put it into perspective.

My First Published Story

My first nationally published story, "Feelings of Love" (*Exceptional Parent*, December, 1977), resulted from such writing. I wrote about my first teenage love. I had demanded a love relationship from a girl who offered her friendship. My actions hurt both of us deeply. So during my college freshman year, I wrote a short, shallow essay for an English assignment. When my teacher read the essay, she said, "You have let this thing fester inside you long enough. Rewrite this and get it out of your system."

I did. It took a solid month of rewriting, soul searching, and crying. But when the smoke had cleared and when the tears had subsided, I felt satisfaction at what I had written. I also felt relief at being able to express my pain.

When *Exceptional Parent* published the story, I sent a copy of it to the girl's mother. In a way, the article was an apology for causing my friend pain. Apparently, the story soothed the girl's hurt feelings because we are now the best of friends.

Through the years I have been able to develop close friendships by letting people see who I really am through my writing. I have found that when people read a collection

of my writings, they feel closer to me faster than they would have by talking to me with my headstick and language board. This is because the other people don't have to keep track of a bunch of letters and can open their minds and hearts to what I am saying.

Besides the desire and the skill to write, I have the proper tools. When I started my writing career, I used an IBM Correcting Selectric II. It worked like a dream. But I still had to retype (or have another person retype) my manuscripts. This process was slow and laborious, but necessary.

A Leap Forward with a Word Processor

In 1978 a computer entered my life in the form of a voice synthesizer. But I soon discovered the world of word processors. When I encountered this world, I felt like I had taken a quantum leap toward being a professional writer. For the first time I could rewrite a story without having to worry who would retype it. Hence, rewriting became less formidable and less time consuming. With a word processor I can move words, rearrange sentences, and change paragraphs with only a few key strokes. Then, I can have my faithful printer retype the story within a matter of minutes.

I cannot recommend a particular word processor because that choice is highly personal. I test drove several programs that were available to me to speed and refine my writing. Then, after studying carefully several programs, I picked one that fitted my needs best.

However, through trial and error and through talking to a friend who is a computer consultant I have discovered that a good word processor has a spelling checker that not only spots misspellings but also offers suggestions for correcting the misspellings, an electronic thesaurus that offers a choice of synonyms and antonyms for a given word, and macro keys that can reduce the number of keystrokes I have to make.

Since I'm serious about my writing, I invested in a program called Grammatik II. This program is not a word processor but rather supplements a word processor. Grammatik is a style checker. It proofreads stories for errors in syntax, word usage, punctuation errors, and spelling

errors, then allows me to accept or reject its suggestions.

But I have learned that a computer is not a writer any more than a hammer and a saw are carpenters. Just as they cannot build a home without the skill and heart of a carpenter, computers cannot write about human experiences and emotions.

Writing means a lot to me. First, it's a form of communication, and since cerebral palsy forced me to be silent for eleven years I value any form of communication. But I have chosen it as a profession because of its diversity. The pen is not only more powerful than the sword but the pen is also more diverse. Written words can be a gentle healer for broken hearts, like a letter of condolence from a friend. Or, they can be a powerful tool for social change, like the speeches of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. So, I hope people who can't speak will take a cue and use their writing to modify their environments or to change the world. □

Editor's Note:

Journey Out of Silence is available in hard or soft cover from Media Productions and Marketing Inc., Suite 202, 2440 "O" Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68510-1125. Telephone (402) 474-2676. Cost \$14.95 (US funds).

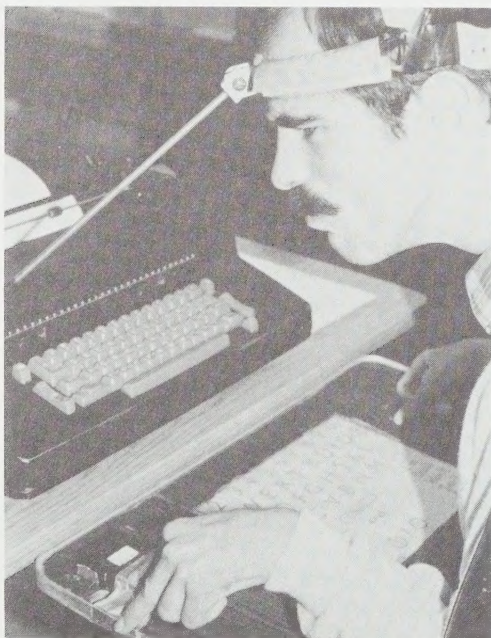
Cumulative Index Still Available

With the December issue of *Communicating Together*, subscribers were sent copies of the Cumulative Index of all articles that have appeared in the first five years of publication, from Fall 1982 to December 1987. There are three sections in the index, listing articles by author, subject, and section. The index has proven to be a useful resource for quickly referencing past articles.

Additional copies are still available and may be purchased by writing to:

Communicating Together
24 Ferrand Drive
Don Mills, Ontario
Canada M3C 3N2

Price: \$6.00 (handling included)



Bill Rush at the typewriter.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

Catching Up on the Mail

KARI HARRINGTON



Kari Harrington was in the original Blissymbol class of 1971 at the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre. Since then, she has completed elementary school at James Robinson Public School in Markham, Ontario. Presently, she is a senior student at Langstaff Secondary School in Richmond Hill, taking one credit subject as well as classes in the Orthopaedic Special Education Department.

I know when I write a letter, I'm always anxious to get an answer back as quickly as possible. In this issue I thought I would try to answer some of the many letters I've received over the last few months.

Nineteen-year-old Rick Olthof is looking for pen pals who have the same interests as he does. Rick has a power chair with a Vois 130 attached. He's very interested in computers, and loves anything to do with cars. He collects car keys and car books. If you would like to write to Rick, his address is 499 Norfolk St. S., Simcoe, Ontario, N3Y 2X6.

This section of *Communicating Together* is sponsored by Pilot Club International, Ontario District.

Greg Gittings is twenty-three years old and lives at Gage Transitional Living Centre in Toronto. The Gage Centre helps handicapped people learn how to live on their

own in the community.

Greg's letter, which is below, shows us how anxious he is to get more education so he can work in the community.

Greg's Letter

♥ > | ⊥ ♥ + !

Dear friend

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I want my letter

□ □ ⑨

in (the) newspaper

Communicating Together.

Communicating Together.

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I need to learn about

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^ ^ → ⊥ 1 + ○ □

to work but my reading

^ ⊕ - ! ^ ♥ + ! .

is not good.

⊥ 2 + ⊥ ♥ + ! ,

Your friend,

Greg Gittings

Greg Gittings

Recently I read in *Horizons* that last summer, there were two job preparation programs for physically disabled young adults offered at the YWCA in Toronto. Participants learned about job skills, career opportunities, and did a four week volunteer work placement. The contact person was Marg Campbell (416) 961-8100. Perhaps Greg, you could call Ms. Campbell to see if this kind of program is being offered again.

A nice letter arrived from Rosie Jenkins. It was full of interesting news about herself. She likes Anne Murray too, so I am going to write her back personally!

International Mail

The last two letters came from the Netherlands last spring. John Eddy Ferman and Patrick van Duinen wrote about a skiing holiday they were going to take in Austria last Easter with a group of handicapped and non-handicapped people. We really hope John and Patrick will write a story about their adventure in the snows of Austria and share it with all of us in *Communicating Together*.

In conclusion, I would like to offer my congratulations to Benny Belair of Coboconk, Ontario for winning the Communication Awareness and Action Essay Award. □

Why I Should Go to California

BENNY BELAIR



Recently, the Community Action and Awareness advocacy group in Toronto, Ontario, held an essay writing contest for augmentative communicators residing in Ontario. The essay was to be written on why the writer wanted to attend the ISAAC conference in Anaheim, California next October. Benny Belair won first prize — a trip to the conference. With his permission, we are proud to publish his award winning essay.

Benny is a student at Fenelon Falls Secondary School, and hopes to earn his graduation diploma this year. A longtime Blissymbol user, he now primarily uses an Epson SpeechPac for his communication.

Why I should go to California? As a nonspeaking person myself, I can best serve the nonspeaking community, by telling the people who

make our equipment that we use, what we need and want. As the nonspeaking community grows, I feel that we will need more and better equipment, therefore we have to tell the people who make the paraphernalia, what is wrong with the equipment we now have, what is good about it, so we can fix it, or tell us how we can fix it ourselves.

I think the people who make our equipment should write us and ask us how the new apparatus is working. I do not mean our consultant, I mean the manufacturers and dealers — that way we can have a say in what we get.

I live out on a farm right now, but I'm hoping to move back to Toronto in June of 1988. From there I can go all over. As a nonspeaking person I think I can talk to my comrades, about what they want in their gear because they have as much right as me to be heard. Therefore, I'm going to ask A.C.S. in Toronto to pass out a questionnaire so I can find out what they want. If they don't do that I will be telling them what I want, not what nonspeaking people want. It will not help any one but me, and I'm not going just for me.

I am going to enclose one of my questionnaires with this essay.

Where I'm living now, I have three other handicapped people, two are labelled retarded but they are not, one has the use of his hand and can talk. The other one cannot move. We have a girl who has C.P. She uses a "Light Talker", but it limits her. She cannot turn it up or

down, she cannot change the viewing screen. It's not just that, that bugs me about it. She cannot say things at the spur of the minute, you know "Hey, Dad I heard a joke today". I'm lucky I can say that but she cannot. The way I see life is, it's a free country — why can't she say what she wants, when she wants? I think this thing is OK for now but there has to be a better way she can talk. We just have to find it.

The Trine System (software in the Epson) is good but it needs a little work. Because I use it, I can say things about it. It's like a baby, I cannot get it too hot or cold. I stay outside from about 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. I'd say I'm rough with all my things but come on — for four grand! I'm not knocking anyone. If someone is going pay that much, I think they should tell us what is wrong with it, they should ask us "do we have any ideas".

I do not like having to link to the Apple with a wire because I'm confined to one place, and if there is fire, how can I get away? I have an idea. About two years ago, on T.V., IBM was selling their PC Jr. Their keyboard was not linked to the main computer, instead it worked with light beams. You could type from your arm chair; up to fifty feet away it worked. If I'm picked to go to California I'll tell them about this.

I have one little problem with any computer, and that is disks. I cannot change from one to another without asking someone to change it. I would fix that too, but if the power goes off I'm in hot water because it has to stay on twenty-four hours a day or it wipes out everything — all my work and games, but you can reload it if you have a backup on disks.

The manuals need more explanation for people that have not worked with computers. Even I have trouble sometimes with the wording. If I go to California I will tell them this. I feel everyone should be able to understand their own manual. If they do not, how can they use their computer to its fullest?

I'm not sure what's out there for me in equipment. This would be a good time to find out, I could alter something to fit me; I'm great at that, ask anybody who knows me. I love to invent anything and everything, from a way to cut paper to

how to eat an apple. I do not mean my computer!

From the day I was wheeled into the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre now called the Hugh Mac-Millan Medical Centre, I knew this was a classy place. I would be more than proud to represent them in California. Augmentative Communication systems mean a lot to every nonspeaking person, and especially Mr. Bliss because if it was not for him we still would be at step one.

You have asked me why I should be picked to go to this conference. This is why I think I should be picked to go to California.□

Editor's Note:

The following are the questions that Benny plans to ask to augmentative communicators about their equipment. Nonspeaking readers may be

interested in responding to Benny's questions. Return the questionnaire to Benny Belair c/o Augmentative Communication Service, Hugh Mac-Millan Medical Centre, 350 Rumsey Road, Toronto, Ontario, M4G 1R8.

Questionnaire

These questions are to be answered fully please.

1. What kind of set up do you have, besides your Apple computer for a base?
2. What do you like about your system? What do you dislike? Please tell everything.
3. How can they improve the equipment to best serve your needs?
4. Are you happy with the way your portable computer is fixed on your wheelchair?

5. How many times has your set-up been down? How did you handle it?
6. What did you have before the computer? Which is better and why?
7. Can you say what you want or is it preprogrammed in by someone else?
8. How can we better your freedom in the way you communicate to people?
9. Do you link up to your base computer? If you do how?
10. Do you have a voice output? If so can people understand your voice output? Why or why not?
11. How can I best tell them about you and your needs? Please just say what you feel, not what your Mom, Dad or whoever, but what you say. Answer this one on a different piece of paper if long.

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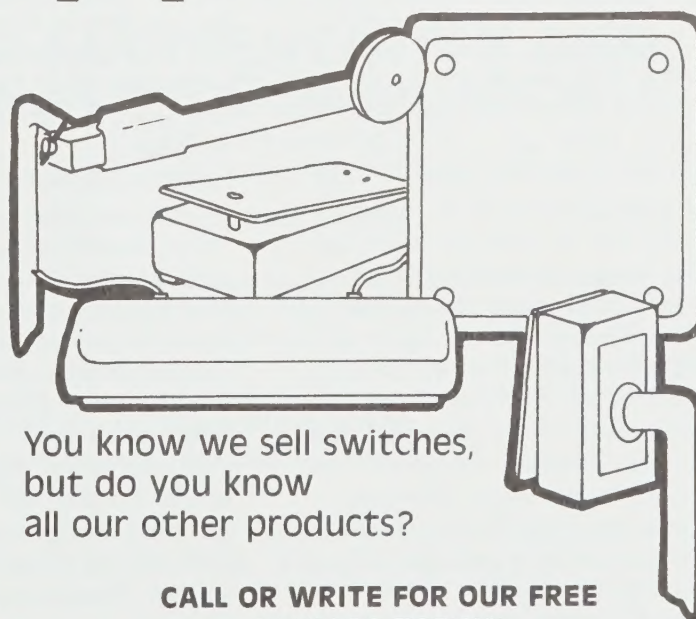
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Update on Brazil

REGINA YU SHON CHUN

Regina Yu Shon Chun is a speech pathologist at Quero Quero rehabilitation school in San Paulo, Brazil. In 1985 she attended a Blissymbol elementary workshop in Bohemia, New York. Last spring she was one of a team of professionals who accompanied a client from her centre to an assessment at the Augmentative Communication Service at the Hugh MacMillan Medical Centre in Toronto, Ontario. She spent one day visiting the Easter Seal Communication Institute, and shared with us the following account of their program in Brazil. We thank Lucille Williams for translating the article from Portuguese to English.

The idea to write this article came mainly from a wish to share our Blissymbol experience with colleagues in North America. In our country, augmentative communication is still in the beginning stages. It was an important step when we discovered the existence of Blissymbols and our school, Quero Quero in San Paulo, Brazil, is a pioneer institution in introducing Blissymbols to our region of Brazil. The school is primarily aimed at working with people who have neuro-motor deficiencies, most of them with cerebral palsy. The first student introduced to a Blissymbol program in 1978 was a severely athetoid boy who was without any kind of oral function or communication. He had a good potential for receptive language and we felt he was a child with good intellectual capability. That made the staff of Quero Quero look for some alternative resources. With the support of the directors of the school, Valgi and Paulina Gasman, we were encouraged to introduce Blissymbols to our student. The initial experience was very positive, allowing for better evaluation of his potential. Blissymbols have helped as well, in teaching him how to read. Today he writes poems, using symbols and the alphabet and he has even written a small book that

has been published in honour of his grandfather.

Based on the example of this child, several other students were introduced to Blissymbols. Today, approximately twenty-four percent of our students are using the system, including all the students at the school who cannot use expressive language.

The work at the Quero Quero school is undertaken by a multidisciplinary team of several professionals consisting of speech therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, teachers, fine art teachers, psychologists and teachers' aides and attendants. Blissymbols are introduced by the speech therapy department but are integrated with the other sectors of the student's program. We always ask for family participation from the very beginning and after a period of initial instruction we ask the child to use the system outside the school, usually starting by using it at home.

We follow procedures that are outlined in the publications of BCI but with variations relating to our circumstances in Brazil. The lack of resource materials has made us look for better ways of reproducing symbols for use on boards. Translation of more materials into Portuguese would lead to better understanding by the family members about the system. Blissymbols have been very important in the life of everyone in the school, including the family. On one hand, it has allowed our students to express themselves in a broader and more profound way — they can express their needs, ideas and feelings, and as well it facilitates the learning process. On the other hand, it has allowed the professionals to contribute in a significant way to make the life of these individuals a little bit better, and allowed for an exchange of experiences among our students, their families and professionals.

For those of us in Quero Quero school, Blissymbolics has been very important; unfortunately, in Brazil it is not very well known. In spite of the positive results in our school, we still face several difficulties such as the preconceptions people have

from lack of knowledge of the system and the lack of material resources. But the progress and the satisfaction that our students have experienced, by having their horizons broadened, motivates us to go ahead. □

ISAAC Announces Consumer Scholarships

The International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication has announced that it is offering six scholarships to consumers to be used toward expenses to attend the ISAAC Biennial Conference in Anaheim California, October 23-26, 1988.

Five scholarships of \$500 each will be awarded. One of these is designated for a consumer from a developing country.

One scholarship of \$250 will be awarded to a family member of a consumer who will be attending the conference.

Winners will be selected on merit, with points being awarded for:

- past advocacy activities
- past ISAAC activities
- papers submitted for presentation at the conference.

Those interested in applying for one of the scholarships should write for application forms to:

ISAAC
P.O. Box 1762
Station R
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
M4G 4A3

Additional funding ideas for supporting consumer travel expenses will be available from ISAAC by March 1, 1988, and may be obtained by writing to the above address.

ISAAC Regional Conference in Toronto

ANN KENNEDY

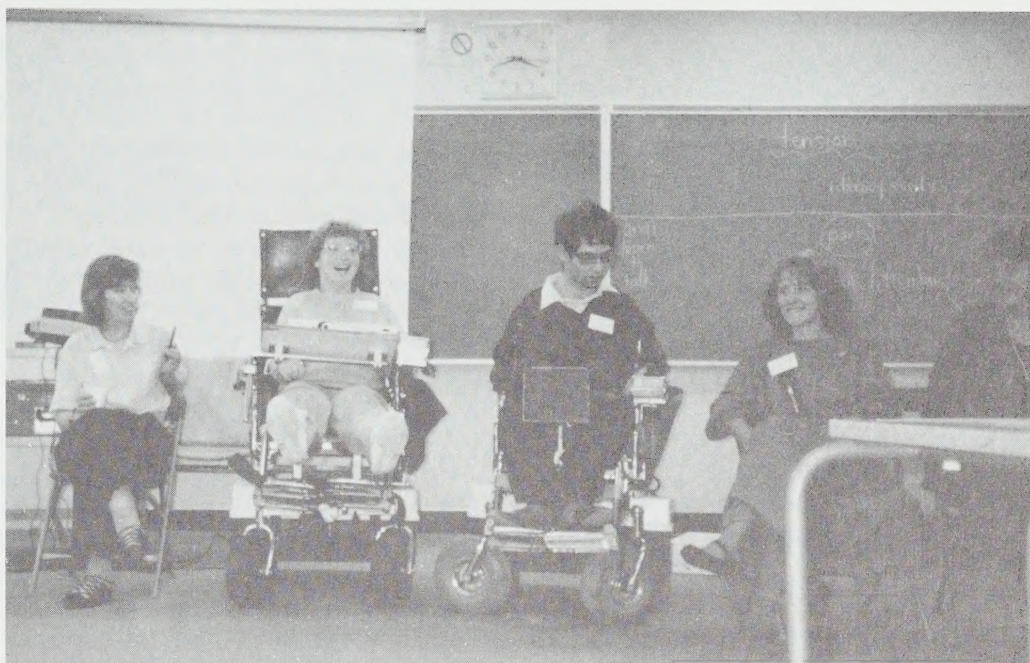
Last November, ISAAC and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education co-sponsored a conference in Toronto, Canada. The conference, titled "Augmentative Communication — Current Issues from an International Perspective" attracted nearly 100 participants from around the province. An ISAAC executive meeting was held both before and after the one day session, allowing many international guests to participate in the day.

ISAAC president Gunnar Fargerberg opened the general session by introducing the executive members present and giving an update on the organization. There are now over 1300 members of ISAAC representing thirty-three countries.

Service Delivery Around the World

A plenary session started the day, with speakers describing the methods of service delivery in the countries they represented. Each country has its own approach. Clive Thursfield outlined the system in the United Kingdom, where service is provided through Regional and District Health Authorities. There are now six Communication Aids Centres set up around the country to which clients are referred by the Health Authorities.

Sweden has been a longtime leader in the field of augmentative



Some panel members at the concluding session of "Applying Augmentative Communication in the School, the Residence and the Community".

communication. Gunnar Fargerberg reported that there are now twenty-five technical aids centres run by local medical authorities. All equipment and devices are provided free of charge through Health and Medical Services. Over \$300 million is spent annually on a range of technical aids from wheelchairs and computers to communication aids.

Barry Romich reported that the United States does not have a universal service delivery system.

Services and funding available are very much a function of where a person lives and what age and disability he or she has. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association is focusing on this problem and its augmentative communication committee has designed standards of competence for the field. The project by ASHA in which ten model sites of service delivery were identified has done much to increase public awareness of the needs of

From the leading edge of the nonspeech communication movement

AAC: AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION

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Editor: **Lyle L. Lloyd, PhD**, Professor of Special Education, Professor of Audiology and Speech Sciences, Purdue University

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Benny Belair presented with Lynnette Norris.

augmentative communicators.

Penny Parnes and Shirley McNaughton reported on services available in Ontario, Canada where the Assistive Devices Branch of the Ministry of Health now funds among other assistive devices, communication devices for individuals up to the age of twenty-three, when these have been prescribed through one of the authorized augmentative communication clinics. By March 1989, this coverage will be extended to all Ontario residents. One concern expressed was the fact that there was little interprovincial communication at the government level. Services available to augmentative communicators are determined largely by where they happen to reside.

Three Streams to Follow

Following the plenary session, the program broke into three streams, and participants were encouraged to choose one to follow for the remainder of the day. One group looked at "Applying Augmentative Communication Systems in the School, the Residence and the Community". The second group focused on "Technology for Written Communication". Still another stream examined "Voice Output Technology for Face-to-Face Communication".

Several augmentative communi-

cators attended the conference and most took part in presentations. Many of these young people have been active participants in the field since it began over fifteen years ago and it was a great delight to see them speaking out as consumers, sharing their experiences and concerns with us. Coffee breaks and lunch time allowed opportunities for us to catch up with old friends and make plans to meet again at the ISAAC International Conference in California in October, 1988.

The Toronto ISAAC regional conference was but one of several that have been held in the past year around North America. Pennsylvania, Indiana and Colorado have all hosted meetings. Not only has this been a source of revenue for the organization, it has been a way for people to keep abreast of new developments in the year between international meetings. We hope many of you are making your plans to attend the next one at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim California, October 23-26, 1988. See you there.□

**This section of
Communicating Together
is sponsored by
Pilot Club International,
Ontario District.**



Executive members Peter Lindsay, Caroline Musselwhite and Shirley McNaughton in discussion during a conference break.

Questionnaire

Regarding Use of Augmentative and Alternative Communication with Nonspeaking Populations

At the Blissymbol Seminar held in Cardiff, Wales in September, 1986, concern was expressed at the lack of documentation of the clinical work done to date in the field of Augmentative and Alternative Communication. Many participants voiced the need for more data regarding the use of Blissymbolics and other communication systems with adult nonspeaking populations. In general, clinicians work with only one or two adults and therefore are lacking sufficient clinical experience to make generalizations, draw conclusions or even document the experiences with any degree of certainty. It was felt that a collaborative effort should be made toward the goal of sharing clinical findings. This could provide guidelines for continued work in this area.

A questionnaire has been developed in Israel by Shula Friedrich, Michal Nir and Judy Seligman-Wine to collect information from clinicians in the field. The authors hope to collect enough responses to collate the data and extract the information which is presently lacking.

Copies of the questionnaire are available in North America from:

The Easter Seal Communica-
tion Institute
24 Ferrand Drive,
Don Mills, Ontario,
Canada M3C 3N2



ANIMATIONS OF THE MIND

The Biennial Conference of the International Society for Alternative and Augmentative Communication (ISAAC) will be held at the Disneyland Hotel, Anaheim, California on October 23-26, 1988. The conference features national and international speakers on a broad range of topics, including the application of the latest technology for the nonspeaking person, teaching interaction strategies, using augmentative systems for employment settings, and consumer-user presentations. The conference will also offer numerous opportunities for researchers, clinicians, system users, and educators to meet at informal round table discussions and to visit the state-of-the-art exhibits. The ambience of the Disneyland Hotel and all of sunny Southern California will contribute to make the ISAAC Conference, "Animations of the Mind", an exciting personal and professional experience.

For information or registration materials, contact Frank DeRuyter, Ph.D., 1988 Conference Program Chair, Communication Disorders Department, Rancho Los Amigos Medical Center, 7601 East Imperial Highway, Downey, CA 90242.

COMMUNICATION OUTLOOK

Focusing on Communication Aids and Techniques

A Publication of the International Society for

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC)

Communication Outlook is an international quarterly which provides a forum for individuals interested in the application of techniques and aids for people who experience communication handicaps. It is a cross-disciplinary information source as well as a reference for those wishing to contact others working in the field of communication enhancement.

Communication Outlook features regular sections on: commercially available aids, aids under development and components to build aids; interfacing and augmenting aids; new publications and resources; centers and groups involved in various aspects of communication enhancement; innovative methods, procedures, teaching strategies and uses of materials shared by readers; and advocacy issues, including new groups, strategies and successes.

For subscription information, contact *Communication Outlook*, Artificial Language Laboratory, 405 Computer Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan 48824-1042, (517) 353-0870.

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United Kingdom

A Blissymbol Book from India

Teachers, parents and therapists looking for ideas for Blissymbol teaching materials will be interested in a reading book sent to BCI by therapists from the Centre for Special Education in Calcutta, India. It was created for one of their students, Pinky Lal. Now eleven years old, she was one of their first and youngest Blissymbol users. At the time, Pinky was communicating using short Blissymbol phrases and she had a sight vocabulary of about twenty-five words. She could read and understand stories consisting of short Blissymbols phrases. The handmade book contains Pinky's favourite stories translated into Blissymbols and symbol phrases Pinky likes to use most often. The pages include Hindu script below each symbol and colourful, hand drawn illustrations. Below is one of the book's simple, classic tales written in Blissymbols and English. Why not photocopy the story and make it the first in a similar book for your symbol user(s)? Send us examples of *your* favourite Blissymbol tales and stories.

∩! X

Smart Bird

1 X ⊕ ♥-⊖.

One bird was thirsty.

X ⊙ ° ∪~.

(The) bird saw (a)
ghara (an earthen pitcher).

° ∪~ ⊙ ∩ ∩ ∩ ∩.

(The) ghara was almost empty.

X ^ x □ ° ∪~.

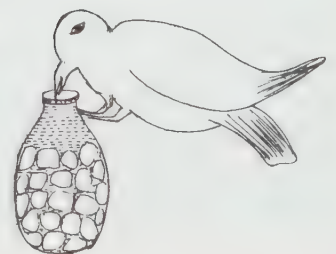
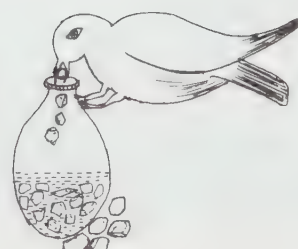
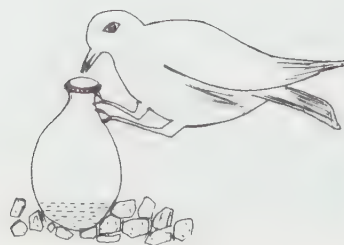
(The) bird put stones in (the) ghara.

~ ↑.

(The) water went up.

X ⊖ ~.

(The) bird drank (the) water.



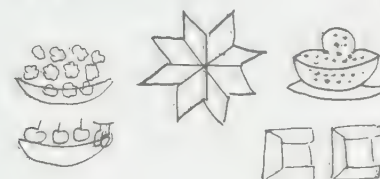
Hindu Gods and Goddesses

Within the Hindu religion practised by many people in India (and other parts of the world) there are many gods and goddesses. Included in Pinky's book is a prayer written to her favourite goddess, Saraswati, the goddess of learning, pictured on the right with the gifts of fruit and treats which Pinky loves to offer to her.

Saraswati



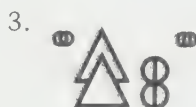
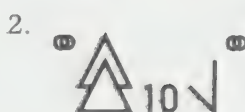
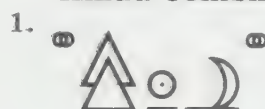
Goddess of Learning



A Blissymbol Matching Game

Our BCI Affiliates in India have created combined symbols for some of the most popular gods and goddesses. Read them and try to match their names with their descriptions. The meaning-based Blissymbols give you some information about the gods and goddesses, but use your library to find out more about them and the Hindu religion.

Hindu Combined Symbols



Possible Answers

Lakshmi — the goddess of money

Ganesh — the elephant-headed god

Kali — the black goddess

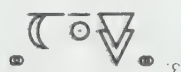
Durga — the ten handed goddess

Answers

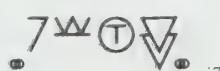
Durga — the ten handed goddess



Kali — the black goddess



Ganesh — the elephant-headed god



Lakshmi — the goddess of money



Blissymbolics is a meaning-based, augmentative communication system that stimulates both communicative and cognitive development. It can be used by persons of many ages and cognitive levels, offering a large vocabulary and opportunities to apply features of the system as communication strategies. Blissymbolics can be used independently, with a variety of picture systems and technologies, as a complement to words and spelling and as a bridge to reading.

Blissymbols used herein are derived from the symbols described in the work *Semantography*, original copyright © C.K. Bliss, 1949.

September 1982, C.K. Bliss granted an exclusive, non-cancellable and perpetual, world-wide license to the Blissymbolics Communication Institute, to provide standards for the application of Blissymbols, for use by handicapped persons and persons having communication, language and learning difficulties. In 1987, the Institute was renamed Blissymbolics Communication International and became a division of the Easter Seal Communication Institute.

The symbol composition and drawings appearing in articles are in accordance with *Blissymbols for Use*, compiled and edited by Barbara Hehner, and published by the Blissymbolics Communication Institute, Toronto, 1980.

CATHY FAIRLEY

The Paraphrase is written for those who are moving into traditional orthography. It offers an independent reading opportunity for the growing reader. The Paraphrase is written by Cathy Fairley, former consultant, Easter Seal Communication Institute.

Wilderness Adventure

Andrew Murphy lives in Clearwater, Florida. He used to write for *Communicating Together*. He communicates by eye-pointing to a word board. This is the first part of the story of his camping trip.

* * * *

I love it when school is over, but the summer is boring. Last summer was different.

A friend told me about *Wilderness Adventure*. It was an eight day canoe trip. Would I go? Why not?

Before I left I got "cold feet". I got worried about the trip. I didn't know anyone. What if no one could talk with me? Could I stand the food? Could I sit in a canoe all day? I had so many questions.

My mom and I flew to Minneapolis. I met Susan who would be my attendant. We talked to Patti, the leader. They were great. They could communicate with me. Susan fed me just like my mom. I knew it would be OK.

I said good-bye to my mom.
Our trip was about to start!

To Readers of Paraphrase

Andrew's story will be continued in the next issue of *Communicating Together*. □



Andrew Murphy can even "talk" when sitting in a canoe.

Success with the MOD

MARILYN EMERY

Marilyn Emery is a Special Education teacher with the Toronto Board of Education. She teaches in the secondary school program at Bloorview Children's Hospital School in North York, Ontario.

She has written the following account of the success of one of her students who uses the MOD Keyboard.

A young man enters the classroom with a broad smile that brightens up his face and your day. Chris Stewart is a nineteen-year-old secondary student who, because of cerebral palsy, has alternative ways of getting around and communicating. The lap tray on his wheelchair provides space for touch plates which Chris uses for driving. This tray also displays a Blissymbol communication board which Chris uses through eye gaze, to identify those symbols that let others know what he's thinking and feeling. For many years Chris was dependent on others to record letters and school work. He could only sit passively by and watch while others played games. Computers have led the way to Chris's independence. With the advent of the single switch Chris gained the ability to access the computer using a head switch. Now he was able to play simple games. However, when it came to word processing, other problems arose. He was unable to focus on a single scanning line where the letters are small and close together. Then came the answer — the MOD Keyboard.

About the MOD Keyboard

The MOD Keyboard System, developed by the National Research Council of Canada (NRC), incorporates a Commodore VIC-20 computer and colour monitor with an Apple II+, IIe, Commodore 64 or one of the IBM PC family computers.

The system provides for alternate

computer input through single or multiple switch scanning in row/column or single element mode.

This "alternate keyboard" is in the form of keyboard display pages which are shown on the VIC-20's video monitor.

Each page can be defined and edited for characters, words, phrases and commands. The pages are used to compose text up to three lines long, which is then sent to the home base computer, in Chris's case, an Apple. Up to thirty custom keyboard display pages can be stored on each Commodore cartridge.

Success for Chris

Chris was enthusiastic about the new system. Having an excellent memory he picked up the routines and nuances of the system. The ability to set up the array in whatever order desired helped Chris immensely in his ability to create and record his work. He could also actively participate in playing more complicated games as a set-up for each different program was created. Chris has new motivation with the advent of the MOD system. He is

eager to increase his vocabulary and could stay working happily on the computer for hours on end. He uses the computer for personal communication as well, such as writing letters to his family. It is hard to imagine Chris's smile getting any wider, but the MOD system made even this phenomenon occur. □

Editor's Note:

The MOD Keyboard is available in Canada from:

Gary Zemlak, Tykris, 32 Kern Road, Don Mills, Ontario M3B 1T1.

Telephone: (416) 445-0276.

or

TASH, Unit 12, 70 Gibson Drive, Markham, Ontario L3R 4C2.

Telephone: (416) 475-2212.

Reference:

- Brandenburg, S.A., Vanderheiden, G.C., (Ed.) (1987). *Communication, Controls, and Computer Access for Disabled and Elderly Individuals* Rehab/Education Technology Resource Book 3. Hardware and Software p.40. Boston, College-Hill Press.



Chris Stewart working at the MOD Keyboard.

Cows Moo Softly; An ABC for Experimentation

GEB VERBURG



"Research and Publications" is written by Geb Verburg, who has been involved in the field of nonspeech communication since the mid-seventies. A cognitive scientist, Mr. Verburg is currently working as research associate in several projects at the Hugh MacMillan Medical Centre, Toronto.

In earlier columns, (Vol.1, No.4 and Vol.2, No.1) I have written about research as a nontrivial pursuit. Looking back at these articles I realize that I was, by and large, speaking to the converted, that is to people who are already committed to do research. I did not address the reluctance or fear that sometimes exists around *research*. In this column I want to discuss a project that through its simplicity and effectiveness offers a way of demystifying research and provides a tool to teach experimenting.

Dr. John A. Ross of the Trent Valley field centre of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education was the principal investigator in a project called *Improving Children's Thinking Skills in Junior Science*. He presented his findings at a recent conference of the Ontario Educational Research Council in Toronto. I am recounting both the method and the results of this study because of its interesting outcome and its

marvellous simplicity.

Background

The project aimed to teach elementary school students how to carry out experiments in order to find answers to questions. Piaget and other developmental psychologists have described children as little scientists and have compared learning to the process of experimentation and hypothesis testing. In spite of these lofty comparisons, many children and adults find it hard to construct an experiment that works.

As well, sex differences have been noted. Studies of the like and dislike of science show that a larger proportion of woman dislike science, and by implication dislike research or the experimental method. A second differentiating factor is field dependence/independence. A larger proportion of field dependent persons dislike or avoid science than do field independent persons. A field dependent person finds it more difficult to find a shape, say a triangle or polygon in a jumble of lines or other disorganized perceptual display. The field dependent person is also more strongly influenced by the social field or environment, requires more praise and is more readily daunted by criticism. I mention these correlations because the results of the project have a direct bearing on these long known biases.

The Experiment

Dr. Ross developed two new methods of teaching elementary students how to design experiments. Both methods were based on rules. The first method was called the Minimal Rule Method or the Mnemonic Rule Method — "mnemonic" because (as you might have guessed) the three key-words were: "Cows Moo Softly". C, M, and S are the initials of principal words of the three rules:

1. you *change* something; 2. you *measure* something; 3. other things *stay the same*.

The second method was called the Formal Rule Method. Here six rules were used:

1. Decide what will be changed;
2. Pick different amounts of the change to test;
3. Decide on the main result of the change;
4. Find a way to measure it;
5. Think of things that might make a difference to the results; and
6. Keep things the same during the test.

Rules 1 and 2 deal with the component of Change; rules 3 and 4 address the Measurement activity; and rules 5 and 6 elaborate on the fact that everything else should remain the Same to make the experiment a valid test of the change that was implemented. Keeping other things the same is also called controlling these other things.

Procedure

I will briefly discuss how mooing cows come to play a role in this research project. In the Mnemonic Rule Method (C, M, S), a short and motivating story was used to introduce the concepts of Changing, Measuring and keeping other things the Same.

The story, which I paraphrase here, was about Lazy Larry who lived on a farm and every morning was awakened by the loud crowing of a rooster. As a consequence Larry woke in a bad mood, cut himself shaving and started his day poorly. The story explains that one day Larry moved the rooster to a far corner of the farm, went to bed at the same time and woke up to the sound of cows mooing softly. He was in a good mood and did not cut himself shaving.

It will be obvious that other stories can be used to introduce rules as long as the rules can be extracted easily by and discussed with the students. The Formal Rule Method was presented to the students in the context of a similar story, *without* the mnemonic relationship. Students discussed the rules, were drilled on the rules and were then asked to design experiments to answer new questions.

Three groups of students were tested, one who learned using the Mnemonic Rule Method, one who used the Formal Rule Method and a third group of students who had received the traditional method of science instruction. A method of scoring students' designs was devised which assigned credits to the three components of the experiment. A maximum of eleven credits could be obtained per problem.

Results

Both student groups who learned using the rule-based methods were better than students who received the traditional instruction. The two types of rules did not differ significantly from each other; however, girls preferred the mnemonic rules (cows moo softly) and boys preferred the elaborate rules method. Students who were field dependent also preferred the mnemonic rules.

Justification

Why have I discussed at such tedious length a little research project that has no direct relation to augmentative communication? I believe that teaching students how to think experimentally gives them a very potent tool for learning and for changing themselves and their environment. Experimentation is an extremely efficient way of finding answers to questions. Knowledge of the principles of research, even the three simple rules — Change, Measure, keep the Same or Control — can facilitate discovery and learning. Students who may be limited in their ability to manipulate their environment verbally or physically have much to gain from the opportunity to learn by experimentation. The rules are very straightforward; their introduction in a classroom environment, in a play situation, or in a communication context requires but a small investment of time.

Applications

What can you do with this tiny "tool kit" of rules to think experimentally? Many things come to mind — as many as you or your child, client or student can think of changing, and for which a measurable outcome can be found. Do I work better with this or that device, in

the morning or in the afternoon, alone or with a partner? If I change the way I greet people will that change the time they spend talking with me? How can I/we/you make student A interact more with student B, C, and D? If I change the organization or content of my display, will that make it easier for me to ask questions, gain more control, get what I need more quickly?

In a classroom, the questions can be produced by the teacher or students. I would expect that a useful amount of familiarization, learning and integration can result from a question about communication that takes into account the capabilities of a student's augmentative communication device.

The process of changing something and leaving other things the same is one that is a common part of all our lives. Adding the rule of Measuring allows this common process to serve as a tool that can help us and our students. It is a tool that will never become obsolete and will actually improve with use. □

Editor's Note:

Our thanks to Dr. John Ross for reviewing a draft of this article.

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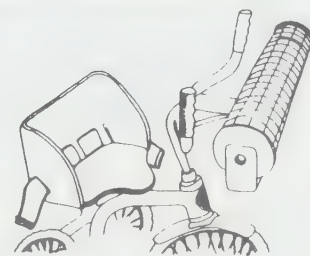
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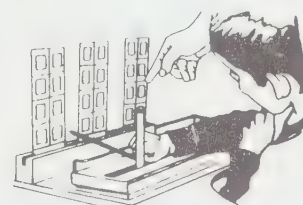
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VOCAs and the Developmentally Disabled

In Communicating Together, Volume 5, Number 3, September 1987, we featured an article "Electronic Communicators: Are They for Everyone?" by Lynn Smith, a teacher of speech and language impaired individuals at the Helen Field Trainable Center in Detroit, Michigan. In it she questioned the effectiveness of electronic equipment with trainable, mentally impaired/severely multiply impaired individuals. We encouraged readers to write in with different points of view. Two responses have been received and we share them with you here. The first is from Pennsylvania, the second from Georgia.

Reaching for Their Communication Potential: Communication Devices for TMR and SPMR Students

SUSAN QUINLISK GILL

Ms. Quinlisk Gill is the augmentative and assistive device coordinator with the Delaware County Intermediate Unit in Pennsylvania. She is involved with several programs which serve nonspeaking and physically handicapped students.

In the growing body of literature and collected experiences in the field of augmentative communication, there are many issues which illustrate that voice-output communication aids (VOCAs) carry with them a multitude of problems. A few among these are the amount of time required to program devices and train users and caregivers, the cost of devices, frequent breakdown and need for repair, poor quality of synthesized speech, and the low rate of interaction by device users. In her article "Electronic Communicators: Are They for Everyone?", *Communicating Together* Vol.5, No.3) Lynn Smith mentions each of these issues as a reason why VOCAs do not meet the needs of nonspeaking persons who are also trainable or severely/profoundly mentally

retarded (TMR/SPMR). There is no question that there are shortcomings to the use of VOCAs and even, at times, valid reasons for a professional to elect not to recommend such a device for a particular nonspeaking person. My concern is that Ms. Smith suggests that these considerations combine to recommend against the use of VOCAs by an entire population of potential users; that is, trainable or severely mentally retarded persons.

Nonspeaking persons with mental retardation do present a challenge to teachers, therapists, and parents. Whether they will benefit from a certain communication device, is not as clear to us as it often is in the case of the bright, physically handicapped child. Ms. Smith points out that the mentally retarded students are often passive, "interacting only at the invitation of others", and that they tend to have a limited network of persons with whom to interact. My question is this: How extensive does one's communication network have to be in order to become a candidate for a communication device which enables one to communicate more effectively within that network? And could it not be argued that passivity and infrequent interaction may be the result of an ineffective means of communicating?

I have been working for the last year with an enthusiastic and talented team of teachers and therapists at a school for TMR and SPMR children. After much assessment, a little hopeful speculation, and hours of training, we now have a number of students using assistive devices to communicate, and several more who we feel are candidates. This was accomplished with parent support in some cases; in others, the parents' support came later, upon seeing their child's success with a VOCA used only in school over a period of time. Granted, these students are dependent on caregivers for providing vocabulary, and for programming, charging, and caring for their devices. But they continue to expand their "network" of communicative partners little by little. Those of us involved have

ceased to be surprised that their communicative potential is somewhat higher than we once expected, even given the cognitive limitations of these children.

Yes, electronic devices are costly and time-consuming; but if they are not too costly and time-consuming for us to see that they have unlimited potential for use by cognitively able persons, I suggest that the investment in time and money is equally due to TMR and SPMR persons if it will help them to reach their highest potential. The rewards are great. No, electronic devices are not a magical solution for the TMR/SPMR student who does not communicate. But they may provide the means and the motivation for such persons to communicate under certain circumstances; that is, given careful assessment and creatively applied intervention, accompanied by much support and ongoing evaluation of effectiveness.

This might mean using a communication device for a trial period, rather than waiting for all the supposed prerequisite skills to appear. During that time, a very open-minded approach to vocabulary selection, rather than the stringent guidelines which Ms. Smith suggests, might be enlightening. We have found that what we wish the child could say is very often not what the child wishes he could tell us! So we may sacrifice "I have to go to the bathroom." for "Leave me alone." Because talking about superheroes seems more motivating for one child than talking about whether it is sunny or cloudy, that's what we programmed into the device. And we even respond to "BOOM!" or the child's puppy's name after the twentieth time with an appropriate comment, when we'd rather go over and turn the thing off. The idea, after all, is to let the child get the feel of summoning the attention of someone who is not right there (and who perhaps doesn't understand his nonverbal signals the way Mom does), and to bring up the topic of his choice, and to change it if he wants to. The idea is to provide what enables the person to communicate to the best

of his or her ability. Our VOCA users aren't such a passive group anymore.□

VOCAs: Another Point of View

MARY ANN ROMSKI AND ROSE A. SEVCIK

Mary Ann Romski and Rose A. Sevcik are associated with the Language Research Center at Georgia State University and Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. Ms Sevcik was winner of one of the first Prentke Romich student AAC Awards, for a paper which she co-authored with Dr. Romski.

This article is in response to the article by Lynn Smith "Electronic Communicators: Are They for Everyone?" that appeared in the September 1987 issue of *Communicating Together*. For the past three years, we have conducted a longitudinal study describing the use of VOCAs (Voice Output Communication Aids), both at home and at school, by thirteen children with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities. Our study leads us to a different perspective than the one expressed by Ms. Smith and we would like to share it with the readers of *Communicating Together*.

The nonspeaking students in our study have shown a new interest in communication. VOCAs offer an opportunity for them to interface with the auditory world. For example, participants in our study using a VOCA have been able, independently, to request assistance from a clerk at McDonald's or to seek help locating and purchasing a record album in a store in the local mall.

Communication aid technology is advancing rapidly. While many VOCAs are still costly, recent developments, such as the WOLF, may provide economically feasible VOCAs and reach a larger group of individuals.

The difficulties and frustrations that Ms. Smith describes can and do occur. The power of communication, however, is immeasurable. The parents, teachers, and speech-language clinicians who have participated in our study would agree that VOCAs are not perfect. Each and every one of them have been frustrated and, at times, discouraged by the limitations of the mechanical system. But each and every one of them has also seen their student or

child communicate with a sense of excitement and power they had never before observed.

The issues Ms. Smith raises must be addressed through careful research and clinical assessment designed to understand the factors that account for varying degrees of success or failure with VOCAs. In turn, the philosophy of intervention approaches and their implementation will take new directions. We look forward to pursuing these issues and to developing effective augmented intervention approaches for nonspeaking children and adults with mental retardation.□

Have You Moved?

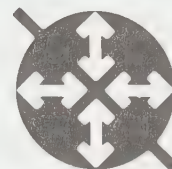
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Executive Director

EASTER SEAL COMMUNICATION INSTITUTE



The current Executive Director, Shirley McNaughton, M.Ed., has notified the Board she wishes to retire to a consultative role in June. Mrs. McNaughton has served as Executive Director with great distinction and, under her leadership, the ESCI has become a world leader in its field of educational service.

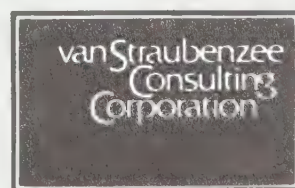
The Institute's purpose is to advance augmentative communication so as to contribute to cognitive, social and emotional development of people with communication, language and learning difficulties. It is renowned for its work in this area, particularly in the development of Blissymbolics.

Founded in 1975, the Institute provides educational service programs; distributes augmentative communication products; conducts research; and provides international leadership in its area of expertise.

Candidates should have outstanding leadership abilities; an entrepreneurial spirit; good management skills; and the desire to help others. They will have a strong commitment to the development of Institute programs. An understanding of augmentative communication, or a willingness to develop that understanding, is essential.

Interested candidates should submit their resumés, in confidence, to:

Mr. Christopher Nichols
van Straubenzee Consulting
Corporation
372 Bay Street
Suite 1402
Toronto, Ontario
M5H 2W9



A New Role for a Blissymbol User

TREENA GUY

Treena Guy is an experienced Blissymbol user, having started using symbols thirteen years ago when she was fifteen years old. She is presently volunteering in the Speech Department at the Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre (OCTC). Ms. Guy used her 400 Blissymbol display to relate her recent experience as a student facilitator to Jane Cale, speech-language pathologist at OCTC.

At Ms. Guy's request Ms. Cale included, at the end of the article, some of the symbol strategies used in writing this account.

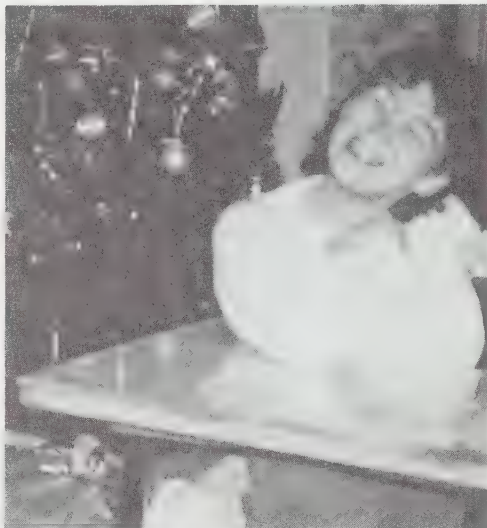
HOW IT ALL BEGAN

I have always wanted to help in Blissymbols in some way. When I was living in Rideau Regional Centre, I was helping Carol, my Blissymbol teacher, with other people who had difficulty catching on and who did not want to talk with Blissymbols.

When I was in McArthur High School, I was telling everyone what my dreams were for the future. We made an appointment with the Speech Department at OCTC to see if it was realistic for me to help teachers of Blissymbols with the children. They had a girl in mind for me to work with. We decided we would work on the computer to give me more independence in programming and actual work with the child.

When I work on the computer, I have a headstick. This was the big problem because I was not able to see what the child was touching on her Bliss display. Presently, I know I need a better way of using the computer and a computer that has speech. It will help me work with children more easily because they need to hear and look at me. I also need the same Bliss display as the child. If I know where the child is in Bliss, when I communicate with the child, I can use the same level of Blissymbols as the child.

My work was cut out for me with



Treena Guy

the next child. I was working not only with the child, but with her aide and teacher. I wanted to make them see that she was able to open up more and give us an idea of what was going on in her mind. I felt that she was a thinker and could give a lot more than they were getting from her. I asked her questions about her family and what things she liked to do. If she did not answer, I sat, looked at her and waited for some kind of response. After a while, she came around and talked a little more. The teacher was surprised at what she was able to do. Her answers grew in number and length. One day the child asked me "What do you like to eat?" It was a beginning. She opened up on her own to question me.

She had many different ways to communicate. She had a Blissymbol number display to which she "pointed with her eyes". She looked at one, two or three numbers for what she wanted to say. She had three different displays — French Blissymbols, English Blissymbols and a French word board. The child did not understand English well enough to communicate without the teacher who was "the mouth" for the child and myself.

What I hope to do in the future is to keep on helping teachers with other people who are having difficulty learning Blissymbols. I hope one of these days I will have all the special tools which will help me work more independently. □

Editor's Note

The following comments were provided by Ms. Guy's supervisor, Jane Cale, speech-language pathologist.

Treena is a creative and competent Blissymbol communicator. Her combined role of user-facilitator brought a unique perspective to her interactions with both the children and team at the Centre.

She demonstrated a natural use of the facilitator strategies of following the child's lead, soliciting a shared focus, expecting communication from the child, providing appropriate language input and providing models for the child's expressive modes.

I know with time and exposure she will learn to assert herself within the team and tell us when we are off target in setting goals and procedures for the children using augmentative communication systems.

Readers may be interested in the Blissymbol strategies Treena used to convey the following concepts in her article:

- dreams (sleep - thoughts)
- realistic (opposite - make believe)
- computer (machine - letter "C")
- independence (part of - alone)
- headstick (begins with letter "h" - tool)
- display (table)
- communication (same as - talk)
- well (begins with letter "w" - same as - good)

Think Before You Speak or Act

CAROL LYNN

Carol Lynn is a staff supervisor at Three Trilliums Community Place, a support service program for physically disabled adults. In response to the article by Mary Ann Merchen "Blowing Off Steam in the Hopes of Being of a Little Assistance" (Communicating Together, Volume 5, Number 2, June 1987) she has written this article giving her perspective on the place of friendship in a professional/client relationship.

In my role as a supervisor in an independent living environment, I have had to relate to a difficulty faced by many disabled young people. Mary Ann Merchen's article "Blowing Off Steam in the Hopes of Being of a Little Assistance" (Communicating Together, Volume 5, Number 2, June 1987), presented the problem well.

Ms. Merchen explained that while she was at school, she had been involved in a two year study to evaluate some new communication aids. She then proceeded to give two reasons why she sometimes regrets having participated in the study. Her first reason is the one that I would like to address.

Ms. Merchen wrote about how she had been an adolescent at the time, and how the researchers she worked with made friends with her. They treated her like an equal, made her feel important, gave her a feeling of being part of a team designing new equipment. She thought that she was building a relationship with them, something which would continue long after the study was completed.

Then the study was over, and the researchers were gone — simply gone, leaving an empty space in her life.

She was left with a feeling of abandonment, thinking that the researchers had been much more interested in the device than in her as a person.

She commented that this reason for occasionally wishing she had not been involved in the study may

seem too emotional to be taken seriously, but in reality she has touched on a very valid concern that affects a great many disabled people in various environments.

The very essence of human beings is emotion and intellect. We cannot deal with one, while ignoring the other.

If people would just think for a moment or two, common sense would make them realize that a person with physical limitations does not necessarily have mental or spiritual limitations. A disabled person has the same feelings, needs, desires, hopes, and dreams that anyone else has.

Unfortunately, some disabled persons may not have had a wide exposure to the community at large, for various reasons such as living their lives in an institutional setting, or being sheltered by over-protective parents. They sometimes have not been involved in a lot of social interaction, have not had the opportunity to form many relationships.

A person in these circumstances may be lonely, and hungry for a relationship, especially in the adolescent stage of life, when the need for love and acceptance is reaching its peak.

To Ms. Merchen's researchers, she may have been just another one of many consumers that passed through their lives, whose company they undoubtedly enjoyed while they were working with her. But to Ms. Merchen, they became all-important; they were a big part of her life.

The researchers did not intentionally hurt her. They simply did not think. But how much consolation is that to someone who has been hurt?

Avoiding Unintentional Hurts

How much better it would have been if they had just put a little thought into things before leading her into a transitory relationship which she had no idea would be so short-lived. She could have spent two years of her life forming other relationships that may have left her with a long lasting friendship, rather than a small shadow of sadness that

may walk by her side for the rest of her life.

When I first became an attendant in a support service project some years ago, I too, mistook intimate working relationships for friendship, and observed others doing the same thing, simply because we did not know any better. Eventually I saw the devastating effects of these actions, when, as staff, we left one by one to go on to other jobs.

Now, as a supervisor in another independent living environment, I stress continually to my staff, through our staff development programs, with candid conversations and, hopefully by example, the importance of maintaining a professional relationship with the consumers to whom we are providing services.

I try to help them understand how to be warm, caring and friendly, without becoming "friends." I endeavour to help them realize that, like Ms. Merchen's researchers, we as staff will someday be gone from here; gone on to other lives and other jobs. But the individuals to whom we are providing service will still be here. If we have permitted a person to become dependent upon us for social needs, then he or she will have an empty place in their life when we are gone.

That is not to say that friendships do not occasionally form. But when they do, they should be based on mutual interest and respect, not merely a result of the intimate interaction between a service provider and a service consumer. The friendship must reach far beyond a staff member's term of employment.

It doesn't take much knowledge or a high level of education to understand this. All it takes is a little thought, which in turn results in a little consideration for the other person.

It can all be summed up in a few words; think before you speak or act. Someone's life might be a lot happier because you did. □

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

ESCI Special Interest Seminars

In Toronto, Ontario

The Easter Seal Communication Institute (ESCI) holds a series of one-day seminars throughout the year on a variety of topics related to the application of augmentative communication. Seminar topics include:

- The Role of the Occupational Therapist in Augmentative Communication, May 3, 1988.
- *Blissbook* — Supporting the Transition to Reading on the ICON, May 4, 1988.
- Technology for Blissymbol Users, May 5, 1988.
- Minspeak and Blissymbol Users, May 6, 1988.
- Programming for an Augmentative Communicator in the Class, June 1, 1988.
- Developments in Augmentative Communication Research, June 2, 1988.
- Designing and Implementing Research, June 3, 1988.
- Blissymbolics Elementary Workshop, July 18-20 and August 22-24, 1988.
- Technology for Blissymbol Users, August 25, 1988.
- Programming for an Augmentative Communicator in the Class, August 26, 1988.

Contact: Training Coordinator, Easter Seal Communication Institute
24 Ferrand Drive, Don Mills,
Ontario M3N 3N2.

Telephone: (416) 421-8377

Trace Advanced Workshop in Computer Access and Use for Disabled Persons

In Madison, Wisconsin

- April 29-30, 1988.

Contact: Trace Research and Development, Room S-151 Waisman Center, 1500 Highland Avenue, Madison, Wisconsin 53705-2280 USA

ICAART 88 Choice for All

In Montreal, Quebec

- June 25-30, 1988

The conference incorporates the 11th annual congress of RESNA. Contact: ICAART, 3631 rue St. Denis, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2X 3L6.

York University Faculty of Education, Summer Course in Alternative and Augmentative Communication July 4 - 15, 1988

Designed to increase the educator's understanding of students who use augmentative communication systems, the course focusses on the nature of communication, augmentative communication within the language arts program, strategies in teaching/learning as they apply to a nonspeaking student and the special role of the classroom teacher in the total support team. The course topics offer opportunities for discussions relating to society's attitudes toward nonspeaking communicators, the benefits to be derived for teachers and classmates in having an augmentative communicator in the class, and the importance of family involvement in the educational program of nonspeaking students.

Course Credits: Special Education Elective ½ course credit

Fees: \$166.95 (subject to increase), \$10, course materials

Location: Easter Seal Communication Institute, 24 Ferrand Drive, Don Mills, Ontario

For information contact:

Office of Student Programs, Faculty of Education, York University, North 801 Ross Bldg., 400 Keele St., North York, Ontario.

Telephone: (416) 736-5001

Prentke Romich Standard Product Applications Training School

In Wooster, Ohio

- April 25-29, 1988
- May 30-June 3, 1988
- July 25-29, 1988
- August 22-26, 1988

Third Annual Minspeak Conference

In Anaheim, California, Disneyland Hotel

- October 21-22, 1988

For any of above contact: Prentke Romich Company, 1022 Heyl Road, Wooster, Ohio 44691 USA
Telephone: (800) 642-8255
Ohio residents call collect: (216) 262-1984

Assistive Device Center California State University

In Sacramento, California

- May 21 and May 22, 1988

"Using the Apple II Series Micro-computer to Realize Educational and Therapeutic Goals"

Contact: Helen Woodall, Coordinator of Educational Programs, Assistive Device Center, 650 University Ave., Suite 101B, Sacramento, CA. 95825
USA Telephone: (916) 924-0280

ISAAC 1988 Biennial Conference

In Anaheim, California

- October 23-26, 1988

Contact: Frank DeRuyter, Ph.D. Communication Disorders Dept. Rancho Los Amigos Medical Center, 7601 East Imperial Highway, Downey, California 90242 USA

About the Publisher

The Easter Seal Communication Institute (ESCI), formerly the Blissymbolics Communication Institute, established in 1975, has worked since its inception toward enhancing the lives of nonspeaking people. In its early years the Institute's primary focus was the development and application of Blissymbolics as an augmentative communication system around the world. This role continues through Blissymbolics Communication International, a division of ESCI, but within a broader mandate that reflects the philosophy and perspective of its professional staff.

ESCI supports effective communication by nonspeaking people through:

- (1) advancing augmentative communication techniques and strategies that contribute to cognitive, social and emotional growth;
- (2) drawing attention to the quality of the learning experience and identifying those types of augmentative communication instruction that contribute to cognitive, social and emotional growth;
- (3) educating, informing and influencing those who are in a position to make positive life changes for nonspeaking people.

Are you considering
the purchase of a
Communication Device?

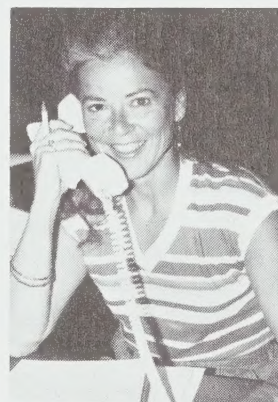
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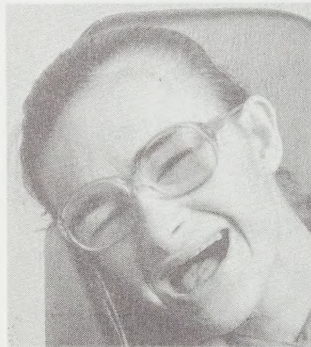
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Ph. 02-403-6332

Do you know how nonspeaking people '**speak**'?

This new film shows some of the many techniques people use to 'speak' or communicate their thoughts, needs and wishes. *Augmentative Communication* is the term used to describe the strategies and techniques used to augment speech.

Speaking for **Our Selves**



The Easter Seal Communication Institute is pleased to offer a film created by four young adults who use augmentative communication. We are proud to give Ann Running, John Dowling, Kari Harrington and Sue Odell the opportunity to 'speak' for themselves.



-
- to increase community knowledge and awareness of the ways in which nonspeaking people augment their communication systems
 - to provide role models for young augmentative communicators and their classmates/peers
 - to enhance professional preservice and inservice training
 - to increase the understanding of all who see this film

It only takes ten minutes
to view this video.

Learn how to communicate with a
nonspeaking person.

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The price for *Speaking For Our Selves* in VHS format is \$20.00 plus \$3.00 for shipping and handling, Canadian Funds.

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Telephone (416) 421-8377 ext 2205

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